# Staff Report

Meeting Date: August 5, 2025

To: Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors

From: Bernadette Cizin, Associate Planner

Subject: Proposed Root Williamson Act Rescission with Re-entry, Agricultural Preserve Amendment (APA-25-07) and CEQA Determination

## Background and Discussion

On March 26, 2025, the County received an application for a Williamson Act Contract amendment to bring approximately 1927 acres, owned by the Root Family, under one Williamson Act contract consisting solely of property under their ownership with the Agricultural Use of rangeland and pasture for livestock production and forage. The property is currently under a Williamson Act contract which has two property owners.

Additionally, the existing Agricultural Preserve should be amended to remove the subject property and a new Agricultural Preserve created as the existing preserve consists of property that is not contiguous nor owned in common.

During the initial review, it was found that 233 acres of one of the parcels included in the proposed contract is not currently under Williamson Act Contract but it is within an Agricultural Preserve. These 233 acres were issued a notice of non-renewal by the landowner in 1998 when they thought they would have to sell it due to financial issues. At the time, the landowner did not understand that they would have to legally divide the parcel in order to sell the 233 acres. This was never accomplished, and they were able to keep the ranch together. The entire legal parcel should be included under contract therefore staff is recommending increasing the acreage under the new contract to 2160 acres.

**Agricultural Preserve Administrator Review**

Staff prepared a detailed report (Exhibit C) for review and recommendation by the Agricultural Preserve Administrator. Based on the report, the Administrator found the applicant’s request is consistent with the County Rules for the Establishment and Administration of Agricultural Preserves and Williamson Act Contracts and recommends the Board rescind and reissue the contract as proposed and amend the existing preserve to remove the subject property and establish a new agricultural preserve.

## Environmental Review

Staff is proposing that the proposed project be considered categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15317, *Open Space Easements or Contracts.* A Categorical Exemption implies that the project will not result in any significant adverse environmental effects. CEQA Guidelines Section 15317 specifically exempts the making and renewing of open space contracts under the Williamson Act, which is applicable to the subject action.

The Board of Supervisors must consider the proposed CEQA exemption together with any comments received during the public review process. Further, the exemption can only be approved if the Board finds, based on the whole record before it, that there is not substantial evidence that the project will have a significant effect on the environment. Accordingly, a finding to this effect has been incorporated into both draft resolutions prepared for the Board’s consideration.

A picture containing map

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Figure 1: Subject Property   
(yellow- 233 acres increased acreage, red – 1927 acres currently under contract)

## Comments

Agency Comments

***Siskiyou County Agricultural Commissioner – May 22, 2025***

The Ag Commissioner noted that their department has no issues with the proposal (Exhibit D).

Planning Response: No Response necessary.

***Siskiyou County Assessor – July 11, 2025***

The Assessor’s office has provided estimated tax assessment values for the three parcels included in this project (Exhibit D).

Planning Response: No Response necessary.

Public Comments

Notice of the project was published and posted as required prior to the Board of Supervisors meeting and no public comment was received as of the preparation of this staff report.

## Recommended Action

Should the Board of Supervisors concur with staff’s analysis, staff recommends that the Board of Supervisors find that the proposed modifications to the Williamson Act contract and Agricultural Preserve are exempt from CEQA and approve said modifications.

A draft motion to this effect is provided below.

## Recommended Motions

I move to take the following actions:

1. Determine the project exempt from CEQA in accordance with Section 15317, Open Space Easements or Contracts; and
2. Adopt the attached resolution approving amendment to the existing Agricultural Preserve and establishment of a new preserve; and
3. Adopt the attached resolution approving the rescission and reentry of the applicable Williamson Act contract including the additional 233 acres.

Exhibits to the Staff Report

1. Draft Resolution amending the existing Agricultural Preserve and establishing a new preserve
2. Draft Resolution Approving the Rescission of the subject property from the existing contracts and Reentry into a new Williamson Act Contract
3. Exhibit A within Draft Resolution: Williamson Act Contract – Draft
4. Agricultural Preserve Administrator Staff Report with Recommendation
5. Comments